



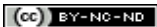
# Revolution without Guarantees

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and Levinas

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# Revolution without Guarantees

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## Community and Subjectivity in Nancy, Lingis, Sartre and Levinas

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Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperative Community*, a collection of writings first published in 1985 and 1986, suggests an understanding of community as irreducibly linked to finitude. Alongside this, he advocates a redefinition of the project of revolutionary communism.<sup>1</sup> This endeavor draws equally on the writings on communication of Georges Bataille and the insistence on finitude found in Martin Heidegger. First, we should recapitulate Nancy's argument in order to determine his presentation of a novel politics as well as the links and disjunctions of his predecessors. More than this, I would like to suggest that a reading of Alphonso Lingis's *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common*, published almost a decade later, suggests an intriguing and promising extension or modification of Nancy's argument. In particular, Lingis suggests an understanding of revolution that appears somewhat closer to the Marxist tradition. I argue that this is partly a result of an inheritance from Emmanuel Levinas, and in particular his account of ethical subjectivity, which, surprisingly, can be productively allied with the political thought of Jean-Paul Sartre. This friendship between the ethics of Levinas and the politics of Sartre suggests the best groundwork for Lingis's development of Nancy's insights.<sup>2</sup>

### Heidegger and the Political

Heidegger is a notoriously controversial figure as a result of his involvement in the German National Socialist Party.<sup>3</sup> There are many possible understandings of the bearing of this complicity on Heidegger's thought, ranging from total dismissal of its significance to complete rejection of his ideas as fascist propaganda. Of those who maintain an inheritance of Heidegger's ideas while rejecting his political beliefs, alternate explanations have been presented regarding the elements of his thought that are

dispensable and culpable as opposed to those that remain valuable.<sup>4</sup> Nancy states his position on this matter as characterized by a distinction between Heidegger's correct insight regarding the finitude of the subject and his failure to carry this understanding into his appreciation of the social:

All of Heidegger's research into 'being-for (or toward-) death' was nothing other than an attempt to state this: I is not—*am* not—a subject. (Although, when it came to the question of community as such, the same Heidegger also went astray with his vision of a people and a destiny conceived at least in part as a subject, which proves no doubt that Dasein's 'being-toward-death' was never radically implicated in its being-with—in *Mitsein*—and that it is this implication that remains to be thought.)<sup>5</sup>

Nancy endorses Heidegger's account of "being-towards-death" as essential to the constitution of Dasein (being-in-the-world) and argues that this has the effect of ruling out true subjectivity for an account of existence. However, Nancy argues that Heidegger's appreciation of being-with others failed to fully appreciate the effect of this thought, and this mistake led to an unreflective consideration of the social that asserts a collective subject, in this case disastrously.

The other crucial thinker for *The Inoperative Community*, Bataille, had previously written criticisms of Heidegger, most extensively in a review of a very early book by Levinas, *Existence and Existents*.<sup>6</sup> One of Bataille's points of disagreement with Heidegger is stylistic; he reads Heidegger as "laborious," "gluey;" his writing "never achieves in itself the annihilation of thinking."<sup>7</sup> In other words, Bataille believes that Heidegger's style is too pedantically philosophical and that he fails to achieve the freedom of poetry. Bataille links this to a lack of passion and an account of the authentic that fails to include truly singular experiences of intensity.<sup>8</sup> He associates this with cowardice, culminating in the opportunism and conformism of Heidegger's Nazi involvement.

This accusation is aimed at Heidegger's understanding of society, according to which authenticity is defined as a resolute acceptance of an "essential rank," which he seems to view rather literally as maintenance of social roles and hierarchy.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, Bataille insists on human truth as a rejection of "the miserable ladders of power" and an experience "*outside of being*."<sup>10</sup> These criticisms are compatible with Nancy's revision of Heidegger's thought and anticipate his argument. Nancy's understanding of love is more passionate than Heidegger's and his approach to writing is more literary, at least in comparison to the early Heidegger of the 1920s and 1930s that Bataille criticizes. In addition, Bataille's criticism of Heidegger's understanding of sociality as presupposing divisions of rank, as characterized by already-given degrees of power, is compatible with Nancy's essential point that Heidegger reintroduces a fixed and totalizing

conception of the social when he ought to be more attentive to the interruption of self-present subjectivity brought by finitude.

In the same review of Levinas that includes many of Bataille's sharpest criticisms of Heidegger, he also takes care to dissociate himself from what he sees as an existentialist aestheticism prescribed by Jean Wahl.<sup>11</sup> Bataille allies himself with Levinas's approach to the *il y a*. Levinas's *il y a*, in contrast to Heidegger's *Es gibt*, is raw existence outside subjectivity and perception. This *il y a* is inherently painful and cannot be perceived according to the standards of rational philosophical demonstration. Instead, the *il y a* is attested to by experience and recorded in literary writing. The literature of *il y a*, for Levinas and Bataille, cannot be appreciated in an aesthetic manner; its effects frustrate any contemplation of beauty. Consequently, Bataille argues that an aesthetic appreciation of language domesticates experience and re-instills a sense of mastery and comfort he wishes to dispel.<sup>12</sup> From this perspective, the turn towards language as the house of Being found in the later Heidegger, the writings of the 1940s and after, remains complicit in the fixity of the world's social responsibilities. Heidegger remains a counter-revolutionary thinker despite his eventual cleaving to the language of poetry.<sup>13</sup>

For this reason, we should approach Nancy's account of "literary communism" with Bataille's criticism of aestheticism in mind. Nancy refers to the "*literary communism*" that he tentatively advocates as a "clumsy expression."<sup>14</sup> First we should be clear that Nancy is not specifying a simply belle-lettristic point of view, or advocating that the literati should live in common or indicate directives for economic production! Nancy conveys this possibility as "something that would be the sharing of community in and by its writing, its literature."<sup>15</sup> To be more precise, he argues that the ambiguity and singularity of literary expression serves as a name for a new account of communism that would appreciate a community of finite beings:

A singular being does not emerge or rise up against the background of a chaotic, undifferentiated identity of beings, or against the background of their unitary assumption, or that of a becoming, or that of a will. A singular being *appears* as finitude itself: at the end (or at the beginning), with the contact of the skin (or the heart) of another singular being, at the confines of the same singularity that is, as such, always other, always shared, always exposed.<sup>16</sup>

This finite community would be essentially differentiated from a work or a project. However, it would not be simply luxurious, nor quiescent. Rather, this community presents itself as a "task and a struggle."<sup>17</sup> We must consider whether the task carried by this community would be essentially apolitical, possible in all societies, or whether it indicates an imperative for social or political change. Nancy indicates, to a degree, that this inoperative

community exists anywhere there is sociality: “it could not happen that in the social desert there would not be, however slight, even inaccessible, some community.”<sup>18</sup> This indicates that the realization or awareness of this community is a matter of degree; the social world might reflect this existential community to a greater or lesser extent. Nancy indicates that post-Stalinist states and right-wing fascisms, as well as the current hegemony of liberal capitalism, all close off this community of finitude to a much greater degree than an alternative social order might.

Nancy’s insistence on the redefinition of revolution should suggest the imperative to think through the type of social transformation that a better reading of finitude and community might enable.<sup>19</sup> Nancy indicates a complex relation to the Marxian understanding of communism and the revolutionary movements of the Marxist tradition. He writes of Marx’s understanding of social labor practiced in “primitive” communism as a crucial insight into the understanding of being-with-others that he advocates: “Community means here the socially exposed particularity in opposition to the socially imploded generality characteristic of capitalism.”<sup>20</sup> This indicates that Nancy’s understanding of community is not a liberal one, and that his understanding of labor in the productive sense, and the property it produces, are not meant to remain within the horizon of commodity capitalism. On the other hand, he dissociates the elaboration of the inoperative community from the traditional communist struggle.<sup>21</sup> He argues that Marxist communism has generally taken the form of a humanism that presupposes the immanence of man and fails to appreciate finitude.<sup>22</sup> His indications of a concrete political approach appropriate to the insights of Bataille and Heidegger are tentative and avoid prescription. Maurice Blanchot, in a very late writing inspired by Nancy’s formulations, suggests that Paris in May 1968, during the fabled alliance of students and workers, presented a historical realization of the communism that Nancy describes.<sup>23</sup> This raises the question of what sorts of direct social events might correspond to or be inspired by the kind of community that Nancy advocates and describes, resting on finitude and exceeding humanist preconceptions.

## Lingis and Revolutionary Action

As an extension and possible alteration of this point of view, we might read Lingis’s work and in particular his book of 1994, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common*. In this work, Lingis suggests the possibility of a somewhat more pragmatic and historically situated approach to revolution, while pursuing a line of thought suggested by Nancy and Blanchot. Lingis is clearly deeply indebted to these two thinkers, and he begins *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common* by conceiving community with the centrality of the dying; that is, the lived experience of finitude.

Lingis distinguishes himself from Nancy by a much more anecdotal, empiricist, fictive or memoiristic style. Unlike Nancy's more abstract descriptions, Lingis provides a series of vignettes that illustrate the ethical relation and singular elements of sociality. He often provides accounts of his travels; this suggests a more personal point of view, though his writing calls into question any simple autobiographical interpretation. He also emphasizes cultural difference as a locus of alterity. For Lingis, as for Nancy, all communication is singular, including cases of an apparently "common" language or culture. However, Lingis often alludes to the concrete encounter with those to whom one feels alien, that is, "foreigners," as a significant point of evidence in the discussion of this truth. In addition, Nancy's focus on the so-called Third World, at the periphery of capitalist commercial circulation, draws attention to the specific ethical demands presented by indigence born of exploitation and neglect.

Implicitly, this raises a political question to Nancy, who devotes much of his work to approaches to love and myth rather than more traditional leftist themes of exploitation and oppression. Nancy emphasizes the singularity of all communication without regard to geographical space or the differences between economic comfort and hardship. He articulates the need to attend to finitude as a groundless ground for community universally. In contrast, Lingis's work gives the distinct impression that an ethical obligation with political consequences is especially evident towards those people who suffer and who are abandoned: "We obscurely feel that our generation is being judged, ultimately, by the abandon of the Cambodians, and Somalians, and the social outcasts in the street of our own cities."<sup>24</sup>

Further, Lingis emphasizes figures of revolution, who are absent from Nancy's analysis. In *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common*, the Nicaraguan Sandinista guerrilla provides an example of an "intruder" who brings an encounter with alterity. Lingis names Daniel Ortega and describes an anonymous participant in the movement.<sup>25</sup> At the conclusion of his later work *The Imperative*, Lingis provides these heroic figures as examples for ethical action: "When I deliberate, it is not to ask what just anyone would do in this situation. It is to ask what Malcolm X would do, what Subcomandante Marcos would do."<sup>26</sup> He also indicates Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as an exemplary figure.<sup>27</sup> In other works, Lingis commends the speeches of Nelson Mandela and, in particular, the iconic figure Che Guevara.<sup>28</sup>

It is worth considering what grounds Lingis has for the presentation of these figures as exemplary. On the face of it, this might seem to reintroduce the conception of hierarchy criticized by Bataille. While all these men are generally viewed as left-wing leaders, they are not orthodox Marxists so much as nationalists. With the exception of Gandhi, none of these figures are pacifist and some are distinguished by their arguments in favor of the

necessity of armed self-defense by oppressed peoples. In addition, all of these figures, as nationalists, have aimed their struggles at the establishment of a nation-state. The stakes are quite high, because Nancy's criticism of traditional political philosophy is aimed at the pernicious fantasy of a closed or incarnated society. Is this, then, inconsistent with the insight Nancy has developed? Is Lingis re-introducing the foundation of a collective subject by means of a "great man" who offers a personality cult to be imitated by the masses?

Lingis associates these left-wing nationalists with an impersonal imperative to aid those who are in need, abandoned, or in a state of physical suffering.<sup>29</sup> Gandhi, Mandela, X, Guevara, Ortega, and Marcos can also be linked, despite their differences, in terms of their individual practices of the critical retrieval of a cultural tradition. Their cultural nationalisms are aligned with anti-imperialism, socialism, egalitarianism, anti-racism, and sometimes elements of feminism. Nancy is most critical of the communist tradition, indeed most political thought, for its reliance on or purported realization of a human essence.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, Lingis champions heroes for whom the advocacy of humanism is paramount; Guevara in particular is generally an emblem of revolutionary humanism.<sup>31</sup>

Lingis's political outlook can be discerned by reference to his writings on ethics in *The Imperative*, published in 2000. Like Nancy, he does not write a systematic political philosophy or revolutionary theoretical writings; he devotes much more attention to singular or individual affective experiences. He draws out considerations of political responsibility through a series of examples and axioms. In this work, he writes of an ethical injunction similar to Immanuel Kant's but exceeding the limits of its rationalist humanism. He writes:

We speak in order to give the other her own voice. We speak in order that the other can speak for himself...Speech becomes grave and imperative when we speak for infants, for foreigners who do not speak the language. When we speak for those in a coma, for the imprisoned, the tortured, the massacred, those buried in mass graves.<sup>32</sup>

Lingis views the political action, the mass ethical action, of the left-wing nationalists as speaking and acting on behalf of the exploited and murdered of history. Here there is an implicit link to Subcomandante Marcos's speech in the film *A Place Called Chiapas*, in which he declares, on behalf of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation: "It is our day, the day of the dead."<sup>33</sup> Lingis and Marcos conceive of revolution as inspired and produced by the victims of the past who can no longer speak but whose memory emboldens others. Justice rests on the awareness of those away from the scene of politics, those excluded to the point of having lost their lives. This notion of justice as requiring a third party distinct from dialogical relations and

contestations can be found in the political thought of Sartre as well as the ethical writings of Levinas.

Both Nancy and Lingis suggest a new consideration of ethics and politics that avoids liberal presuppositions regarding a free and rational subject as starting point and goal. Instead, these two contemporary thinkers advocate community as irreducible to experience and progressive political change. Their positions can be strengthened by an account of the discoveries of phenomenological thinkers of the previous generation who also aimed to reinvent the possibilities of politics. Unlike Lingis and Nancy, Sartre and Levinas wrote on behalf of subjectivity. For Sartre, this emanates from a concern with a free creative subject charged with liberating his fellows; for Levinas, ethical subjectivity only appears with a profound experience of heteronomy in the awareness of another. I argue, however, that the political innovations of the former share many insights with the ethical discoveries of the latter. For Sartre and Levinas, "the subject" does not denote a self-present, rational, or autonomous being; rather subjectivity is written patiently and descriptively as the kernel of the community elucidated by their successors, Lingis and Nancy.

## Sartre and Revolution

I argue for two possible post-Heideggerian points of contact with Lingis's proposed praxis. The first is Jean-Paul Sartre, who championed the revolutionary vanguard of the Third World. In general, the existentialist Marxist schema is discarded by many contemporary thinkers, and may seem a relic at first glance. Nancy alludes to Sartre's description of communism as the horizon of our time, acknowledging its partial relevance, but in order to argue that rather a "communist exigency or demand communicates with the gesture by means of which we must go farther than all possible horizons."<sup>34</sup> Nancy associates Sartre with a totalizing historical method according to which communism corresponds to the realization of an essential human freedom, rather than an exploration of communication as it exceeds any historical realization of essence. Blanchot, in his book inspired by Nancy, is dismissive towards the fused group, which Sartre develops as a phenomenological account of the revolutionary fighters commanded by figures such as Guevara. Blanchot associates this path with suicide cults and fascism.<sup>35</sup> I suggest that this portrayal of Sartre and his political ideals is uncharitable. To the contrary, Sartre's analyses suggest, in part, grounds for action on behalf of the excluded, such as that spoken by Marcos and elaborated by Lingis.

Unlike Nancy, the early Sartre does not allow for Heidegger's notion of a fundamentally social aspect, equiprimordial with ontological solitude. Sartre does not take sociality as primary; however, he also dismisses the



possibility of the “destiny of a people” to which Heidegger alludes.<sup>36</sup> Sartre in 1943 does allow for the possibility of a perception of a community; however, perception of fraternity is only psychological, held by an individual, and need not be confirmed by others.<sup>37</sup> Sartre’s human consciousness transcends immanence; for Nancy, only the communication born of finitude can do this. There is, however, even in this early Sartre the implication of a desire for revolutionary humanism: “the ideal We-subject” as a “unity of transcendences.”<sup>38</sup> Sartre’s later work will suggest that this very universal “We-subject”, a revolutionary humanity entirely in command of nature, along the lines suggested by a Marxist Hegelianism, might be in fact be approachable.

Thomas R. Flynn has demonstrated that Sartre progresses from his early concern with an abstract freedom to an increasing imperative toward the concrete realization of freedom in society.<sup>39</sup> We see an increasing concern with fraternity and equality, and with the possibilities of concrete freedom, in Sartre’s later work. For him, impersonal economic laws could never produce revolution.<sup>40</sup> Sartre argues that the revolutionary *qua* revolutionary is a worker with first-hand knowledge of the concrete productive possibilities of society, but also made revolutionary by his oppression and agitated by the curtailment of his freedom by the inherited power of the bourgeoisie. However, for Sartre, these first two conditions cannot possibly suffice for revolutionary action, as they might be rationalized as necessary or natural. The specific capacity for revolutionary thought and action can only be the ability of a free human being. This subject is “defined by his *going beyond* the situation in which he is placed,” specifically his temporal orientation toward the future.<sup>41</sup>

For this reason, Sartre will eventually assert an absolute distinction between the mass – which is inert and merely self-identical, presenting itself for analysis – and the class, which is free and self-conscious: “Classes don’t just happen to exist, they are made.”<sup>42</sup> It is the nature of engagement to overcome identity, either in an individual or in a group. Sartre’s argument is not merely an existentialist critique of the presuppositions of official Communism. Rather, Sartre begins to assimilate an aspect of Marxism towards which he had previously found alien: the possibility of a collective subject. As Sartre writes, the work relationship is not only between man and nature, but also between man and man; the nature of collective labor tends to produce a class, rather than merely an aggregate of laboring individuals.<sup>43</sup>

For this reason, a revolutionary subject is essentially relational. As for Nancy, it is on communication between profoundly limited singular beings that revolution is built. In *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre will examine Stalinism as an increasing bureaucratization of the possibilities of the fused group. This culminates in near-total submission to what he calls the practico-inert, a dead and sedimented reification of past praxes. In Sartre’s fused group, “[i]f there is a leader, each one is leader in the name of the leader.”<sup>44</sup>

It is Sartre's contention that it should be possible for such a group, like Resistance cadres, to be fully democratic in their shared project. Every individual is capable of free thought and action to a degree left untheorized by even the most supple Marxism.<sup>45</sup> It is imperative even for the enthusiastically Marxist Sartre that "an already lived History *resists* any a prior schematism."<sup>46</sup> This means that every step of the way, historical events can only be produced by individuals who are in possession of some small margin of free action: "we must expect to find the support of collective objects in the concrete activity of individuals."<sup>47</sup>

Sartre's investigations into existential psychoanalysis discovered that human beings tended to be far more determined from without – by economics, history, society, their family, and other factors – than he had originally believed to be the case. However, he maintained throughout the possibility of a marginal transformation that he named freedom; the capacity by which all individuals can produce a discrepancy with the social framework into which they are thrown. For this reason, Sartre promised to reveal history as a "*detotalized totality*."<sup>48</sup> The revolution itself requires action that is not guaranteed by history – action that will only come in to the world through concrete individuals. His Marxism strives to provide an adequate description of these possibilities, one that settles neither on a purely individual investigation of neuroses and family romance, nor a macrocosmic study of economic and historical relations.

Sartre indicates that basic social existence is "an ensemble each of whose members is determined in alterity by the others."<sup>49</sup> The question he tries to answer is how this series is determined and negated by History and transformed into a group whose members would be "determined by the others in reciprocity."<sup>50</sup> This is the process by which an oppressed class would adopt a revolutionary praxis.<sup>51</sup> Sartre indicates that the beginning of the bond between individuals is an "immediate discovery of oneself in the Other."<sup>52</sup> The group's permanence depends on a "regulatory third person," a possibly rotating position of quasi-transcendence that "stands in a tense and contradictory relation of contradiction-immanence."<sup>53</sup> All actions in the group are reciprocal; an individual's action has bearing on her comrades; "in driving my tenacity to the limit, I produce this tenacity everywhere."<sup>54</sup> Violence is wielded, defensively against the enemy, but also a sovereign "*violence against necessity*."<sup>55</sup> Any spokesman can represent the group as a whole; "his reactions are those of the group as a totality which is embodied in each of its temporary modalities."<sup>56</sup> The individual's immersion in the group depends on the pledge, which is the hinge between his inner world and the demands of social discipline.

The contrast between Lingis and Marcos, on one hand, and Sartre, on the other, is that for the former the "third party" is conceived and experienced as dead. Rather than discovering their commonalities in the presence of a vanguard figure, Lingis advocates a revolutionary group

similar to that practiced by Marcos and the EZLN, achieving co-implication between self and others in a collective endeavor because of the witness of the dead. This is a decisive link with Nancy. While Lingis maintains the significance of the guerrilla fighter as revolutionary figure, this figure is essentially linked to finitude; not only to the anticipation of death but to the profound experience of those who have already died. This presence of death as a political factor links Lingis's revision of Sartre to Levinas and to Bataille and in particular to their insistence on the *il y a*.

## Levinas's Ethical Subjectivity

Supplementing Sartre, Levinas presents a second possible source for a post-Heideggerian revolutionary project. Levinas is much less clearly aligned with revolutionary politics than Sartre; while he was sympathetic towards the left, he is often remembered, politically, for his Zionist engagement.<sup>57</sup> However, his challenging work of 1974, *Otherwise than Being*, which presents a meditation on the ethical subject, is rich in possibilities for political thought.<sup>58</sup> Unlike the early Sartre, Levinas's subject is in relation with another in essence. While Sartre views collectivity as an accomplishment, for Levinas, as for Nancy, it is at the origin of existence and consciousness. For Levinas, unlike the existentialists, subjectivity is not an isolated self-consciousness. Subjectivity as such is the calling into question of freedom in the presence of responsibility to others, rather than freedom itself. As Lingis describes it, "a relationship with alterity as such is constitutive of subjectivity."<sup>59</sup>

This ethical subjectivity beyond and prior to self-consciousness relies on the *il y a* advocated by Levinas and Bataille. Levinas argues that the "encumberment of the *there is*" is necessary for ethics.<sup>60</sup> This is because the *il y a*, a painful excess of being, interrupts the self-presence that would otherwise allow for a pre-ethical autonomy and rational certainty. In a sense Levinas appears to be the precise opposite of Sartre, given that it is a profound lack of freedom that opens up the possibility of ethics, an experience of being held hostage by responsibility and captured by one's body. Levinas describes the ethical subject as follows:

Vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding, passivity more passive than all patience, passivity of the accusative form, trauma of accusation suffered by a hostage to the point of persecution, implicating the identity of the hostage who substitutes himself for the others: all this is the self, a defecting or defeat of the ego's identity. And this pushed to the limit is sensibility, sensibility as the subjectivity of the subject. It is a substitution for another, one in the place of another expiation.<sup>61</sup>

This passivity that damages and overcomes identity corresponds to a persecution prior to any choice or commitment.<sup>62</sup> At a certain moment, this seems to risk an entirely paralyzing and guilt-ridden conception of human existence. However, Levinas's work emphasizes that this responsibility is shared. Commonality of responsibility prevents the potential nihilism of being held hostage as the truth of subjectivity. In a manner not entirely divorced from Sartre, a common experience of devotion to an external party leads to the possibility of action.

Lingis translated *Otherwise than Being* into English in 1981. In his introduction, he emphasizes that rather than a simple asymmetry according to which my freedom is impeded by responsibility to my neighbor, it is the appearance of a third separate from both me and you that raises the possibility of justice. As Lingis puts it,

To find that the one before whom and for whom I am responsible is responsible in his turn before and for another is not to find his order put on me relativized or cancelled. It is to discover the exigency for justice, for an order among responsibilities.<sup>63</sup>

The recognition of shared responsibility opens the possibility of an understanding of ethics that is not purely personal or guilt-driven; rather, a profoundly *social* justice. This awareness of a third party that is "other than the other...makes me one among others."<sup>64</sup> Awareness of equality in responsibility, brought by the presence of an exterior agent, recalls the role of the third person in Sartre's work. Lingis's emphasis on figures of national liberation—Gandhi, Mandela, and Guevara—suggests that they function as a collective "third party" mediating social relations in the direction of justice. However, Lingis renders these figures far more implicated in an appreciation of finitude. This is not merely through the revolutionary's risking of his life but through a more significant relationship to speech on behalf of those politically excluded who for that reason are ethically consequent. This view of the third has the potential to unite Levinas with Sartre and Lingis with Nancy. Nancy's work suggests an altered conception of the political that forestalls questions of a human essence or a unified collective work. Lingis, through a background in the Sartrean political and the Levinasian ethical, returns to the question of justice in a manner more recognizable to the history of revolutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xl.

- <sup>2</sup> A reading of this sort has been suggested by Kris Sealey; see her “Levinas, Sartre and the Question of Solidarity,” *Levinas Studies: An Annual Review* 7 (2012): (forthcoming).
- <sup>3</sup> See Victor Fariás, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1991), and Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). See also David Farrell Krell, “Introduction to the Paperback Edition” of *Nietzsche: Volume One and Two* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991).
- <sup>4</sup> See Oliver Marchart “The Contours of ‘Left Heideggerianism’: Post-Foundationalism and Necessary Contingency,” in *Post-foundational Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 11-34.
- <sup>5</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 14.
- <sup>6</sup> See Andrew Ryder, “Bataille against Heidegger: Poetry and the Escape from the World,” 71-85.
- <sup>7</sup> Georges Bataille, “From Existentialism to the Primacy of Economy,” in *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature*, ed. Jill Robbins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 160.
- <sup>8</sup> Bataille, “Existentialism,” 161.
- <sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volume One and Two*, 46; Faye, *Heidegger*, 239.
- <sup>10</sup> Georges Bataille, “Critique of Heidegger,” *October* 117 (Summer 2006): 34.
- <sup>11</sup> Bataille, “Existentialism,” 163.
- <sup>12</sup> Bataille, “Existentialism,” 168.
- <sup>13</sup> Ryder, “Bataille,” 78-79.
- <sup>14</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 26.
- <sup>15</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 26.
- <sup>16</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 31.
- <sup>17</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 35.
- <sup>18</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 35.
- <sup>19</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, lx.
- <sup>20</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 74.
- <sup>21</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 69.
- <sup>22</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (Barrytown: Station Hill, 1988), 29-31.
- <sup>24</sup> Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), x.
- <sup>25</sup> Lingis, *Community*, 10, 34-37, 61.
- <sup>26</sup> Alphonso Lingis, *The Imperative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 222.
- <sup>27</sup> Lingis, *Community*, 172.

- <sup>28</sup> Alphonso Lingis, *Dangerous Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 64; Alphonso Lingis, *Trust* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 141.
- <sup>29</sup> Lingis, *Imperative*, 221-222.
- <sup>30</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 3.
- <sup>31</sup> Clive W. Kronenberg, "Manifestations of Humanism in Revolutionary Cuba: Che and the Principle of Universality," *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 36 no. 2 (March 2009): 66-80, 66.
- <sup>32</sup> Lingis, *Imperative*, 136.
- <sup>33</sup> *A Place Called Chiapas*, dir. Nettie Wild, British Columbia Arts Council, 1998.
- <sup>34</sup> Nancy, *Inoperative*, 1, 8-9.
- <sup>35</sup> Blanchot, *Unavowable*, 7.
- <sup>36</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1962), 385.
- <sup>37</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1993), 536.
- <sup>38</sup> Sartre, *Being*, 550.
- <sup>39</sup> Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism: The Test Case of Collective Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 5.
- <sup>40</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays* (New York: Collier, 1955), 209.
- <sup>41</sup> Sartre, *Literary*, 225.
- <sup>42</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Communists and Peace with A Reply to Claude Lefort* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 96.
- <sup>43</sup> Sartre, *Communists*, 226.
- <sup>44</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume One* (New York: Verso, 2004), 254.
- <sup>45</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Vintage, 1968), 11.
- <sup>46</sup> Sartre, *Search*, 123.
- <sup>47</sup> Sartre, *Search*, 77.
- <sup>48</sup> Sartre, *Search*, 78.
- <sup>49</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 829.
- <sup>50</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 828.
- <sup>51</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 349.
- <sup>52</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 353.
- <sup>53</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 381.
- <sup>54</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 404.
- <sup>55</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 406.
- <sup>56</sup> Sartre, *Critique*, 571.

<sup>57</sup> For a discussion of Levinas's political legacy, see Andrew Ryder, "On the Left-wing Reading of Levinas: Derrida, Lingis, Dussel," *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 21 (Summer 2012): (forthcoming).

<sup>58</sup> Enrique Dussel's is among the best explorations of the innovations of this book in the field of political action; see *Philosophy of Liberation* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 16-58.

<sup>59</sup> Alphonso Lingis, "Translator's Introduction," in Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1981), xix.

<sup>60</sup> Levinas, *Otherwise*, 164.

<sup>61</sup> Levinas, *Otherwise*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Levinas, *Otherwise*, 136.

<sup>63</sup> Lingis, "Introduction," xli.

<sup>64</sup> Lingis, "Introduction," xli.